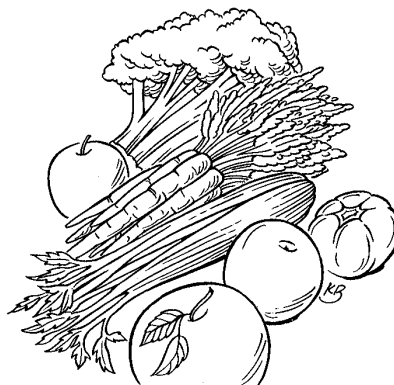


How Can I Avoid Weight Gain When I Stop Smoking?

Quitting smoking doesn't mean you'll automatically gain weight. And even if you do gain a couple pounds, that's not as important as saving your life... and the lives of others. When people gain weight, it's usually because they start to eat more once they quit smoking. If you watch what you eat and stay physically active, you may not gain at all!



What should I eat and drink?

- Plenty of fruits and vegetables (at least 8–10 servings a day).
- Whole-grain cereals, pastas and breads.
- Fat-free or low-fat snacks like pretzels.
- Sugar-free hard candy.
- Foods low in saturated fat, trans fat and cholesterol. Read food labels and choose healthful options.
- Drink lots of water! Cut back on alcohol and drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea and soft drinks)

How can physical activity help?

- Walking and other exercise releases stress and calms you.
- It can help control your appetite.
- It can improve your mood.
- It burns calories and can help you lose weight if you take in fewer calories than you use up.
- It can help you stay at a healthy weight.

What are good activities to help keep weight off?

Becoming more active can help you reduce or maintain your weight. Try any of the following. Check with your doctor first if you've been inactive a long time or have medical problems, you're middle-aged or older, and you plan a vigorous exercise program.

- Walk in your neighborhood or at indoor shopping malls.
- Do gardening or yard work.
- Take stairs instead of escalators and elevators.
- Park farther from stores and walk.
- Learn a new dance.
- Ride a bicycle.
- Try aerobic dance classes or use a videotape at home.

What can I do instead of smoking?

- Play with a pencil, paper clip or marbles.
- Munch on carrots, apples, celery and sugarless gum.
- Brush your teeth often and keep a fresh taste in your mouth.
- Keep your hands busy — wash the car, garden, knit, do crossword puzzles, write letters, cook.
- Try a new sport.
- Get plenty of rest and physical activity.

What else can I do?

- Try relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation.
- Think positive thoughts! Feel proud about quitting.
- Write down why you're quitting and read it.
- Spend time with other nonsmokers.
- Go where there's no smoking, like stores, movies, churches and libraries.
- Reward yourself every day or week that you stay a nonsmoker. Don't use food as a reward.

How can I learn more?

1. Talk to your doctor, nurse or other health-care professionals. If you have heart disease or have had a stroke, members of your family also may be at higher risk. It's very important for them to make changes now to lower their risk.
 2. Call 1-800-AHA-USA1 (1-800-242-8721) or visit americanheart.org to learn more about heart disease.
 3. For information on stroke, call 1-888-4-STROKE (1-888-478-7653) or visit StrokeAssociation.org.
- We have many other fact sheets and educational booklets to help you make healthier choices to reduce your risk, manage disease or care for a loved one.
- Knowledge is power, so *Learn and Live!*

Do you have questions or comments for your doctor?

Take a few minutes to write your own questions for the next time you see your healthcare provider. For example:

How do I read food labels?

Your contribution to the American Heart Association supports research that helps make publications like this possible.

The statistics in this sheet were up to date at publication. For the latest statistics, see the *Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics Update* at americanheart.org/statistics.

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